

## POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Population characteristics describe the diverse social, demographic, and economic features of the Nation's population. There were over 145 million women and girls in the United States in 2004, representing slightly more than half of the population.

Comparison of data by factors such as sex, age, and race and ethnicity can be used to tailor the development and evaluation of programs and policies serving women.

The following section presents data on population characteristics that affect women's physical, social, and emotional health. Some of these characteristics include the age and racial and ethnic distribution of the population, household composition, education, income, occupation, and participation in Federal programs.



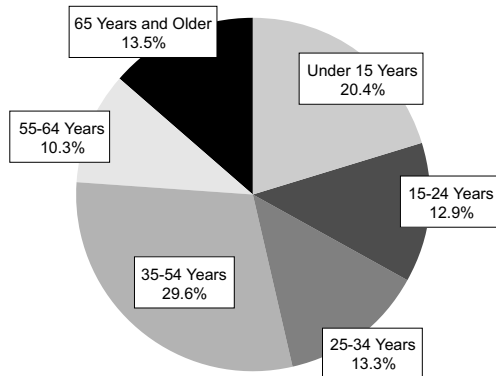
## U.S. POPULATION

In 2004, the U.S. population was over 285 million, with females representing 51.1 percent. Females younger than age 35 accounted for 46.6 percent of the female population, those aged 35-64 represented 39.9 percent, and females over age 65 accounted for 13.5 percent.

The distribution by sex was fairly even across all age groups, except among older adults, where women accounted for a greater percentage of the population. Of those aged 65 and older, 57.5 percent were women.

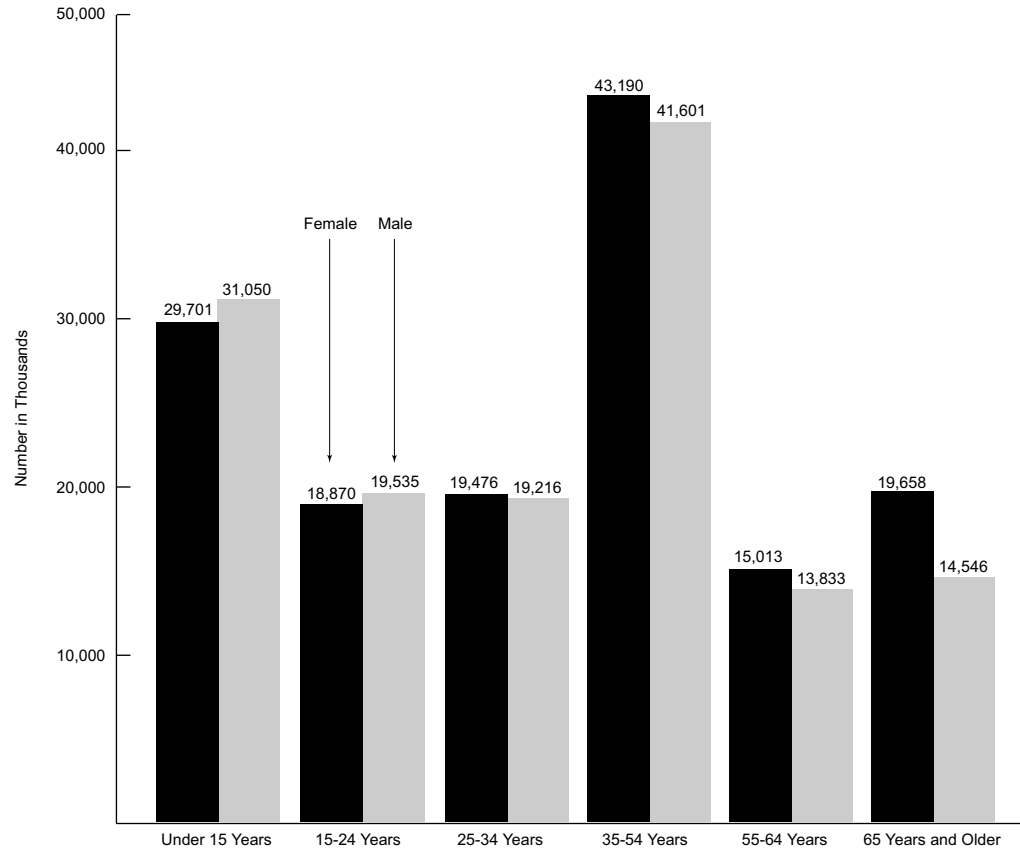
## U.S. Female Population,\* by Age, 2004

Source I.1: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey



## U.S. Population, by Age and Sex,\* 2004

Source I.1: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey



\*Includes only non-institutionalized population not living in group quarters.

## U.S. FEMALE POPULATION BY RACE/ETHNICITY

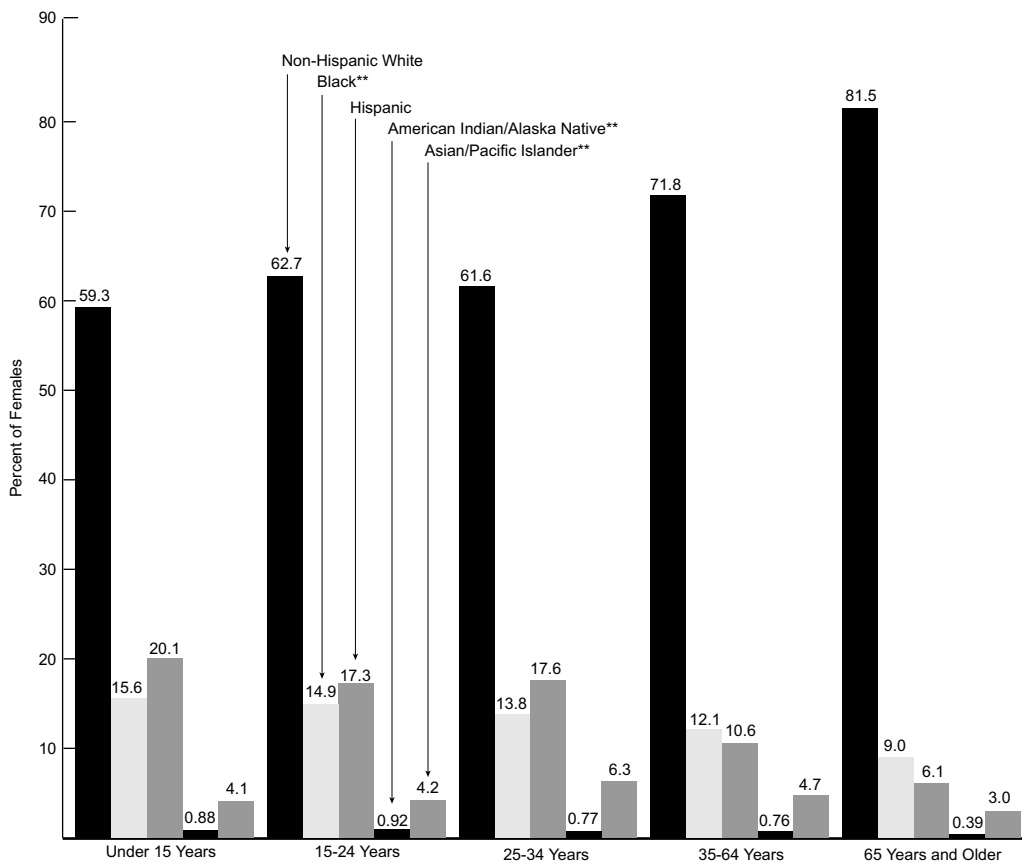
The growing diversity of the U.S. female population is reflected in the racial and ethnic distribution of women across age groups. The younger female population, under 25 years of age, is significantly more diverse than the older female population. In 2004, females who identified as Hispanic or non-White in race and ethnicity represented 39.4 percent of the females under 25 years of age, while among women 65 years and older, only 18.5 percent were Hispanics or non-Whites.

Evidence indicates that race and ethnicity correlate with health disparities within the U.S. population. Coupled with the increasing diversity of the U.S. population, these health disparities make culturally-appropriate, community-driven programs critical in improving the health of the entire U.S. population.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office of Minority Health. Disease burden and risk factors. April 4, 2006. <http://www.cdc.gov/omh/AMH/dbrf.htm>

## U.S. Female Population,\* by Age and Race/Ethnicity, 2004

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey



\*Includes only non-institutionalized population not living in group quarters. \*\*May include Hispanics.



## HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

In 2004, 53.2 percent of women 18 and older were married and living with their spouses; this includes married couples living with other people, such as parents. Over 12 percent of women over age 18 are the heads of their households, meaning that they have children or other family members, but no spouse, living with them in a house that they own or rent. Women who are heads of households include single mothers,

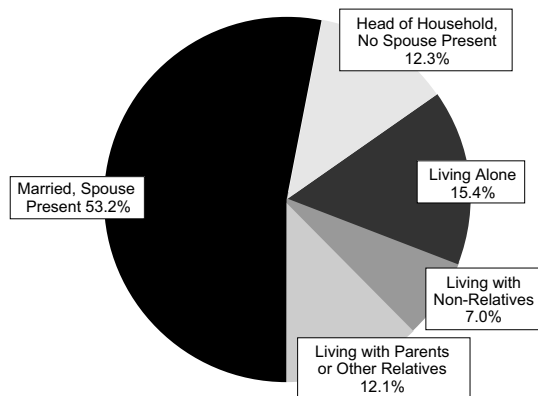
single women with a parent or other close relative in their house, and women with other household configurations. The remaining women lived alone (15.4 percent), with non-relatives (7.0 percent), and with parents or other relatives (12.1 percent).

Women in female-headed households are more likely than women in married-couple families to have incomes below the Federal poverty level (see “Women and Poverty,” page 15). Black

women are the most likely to be a single head of household (29.1 percent), while Asian women are the least likely (7.2 percent). Hispanic women and women of other races also have high rates of female-headed households (16.4 and 15.9 percent, respectively).

### Adult Women,\* by Household Composition, 2004

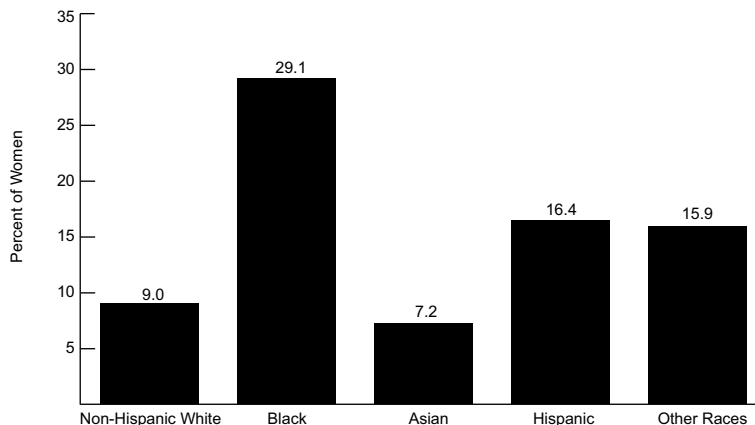
Source I.2: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey



\*Civilian, non-institutionalized population aged 18 years and older.

### Women Who Are Heads of Households,\* by Race/Ethnicity, 2004

Source I.2: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey



\*Civilian, non-institutionalized population aged 18 years and older; includes women who have children or other family members, but no spouse, living in a house that they own or rent.

### WOMEN AND POVERTY

In 2004, nearly 37 million people in the United States lived with incomes below the Federal poverty level.<sup>1</sup> The poverty rate for all women 18 years and older in 2004 was 12.7 percent (representing 14.3 million women), compared to a rate of 9.3 percent for men. Women in families, those who live with people to whom they are directly related, experience higher rates of poverty than men in fam-

ilies (9.8 versus 6.7 percent). Men in households with no spouse present are considerably less likely to have incomes below the poverty level than women in households with no spouse present (11.8 versus 24.8 percent).

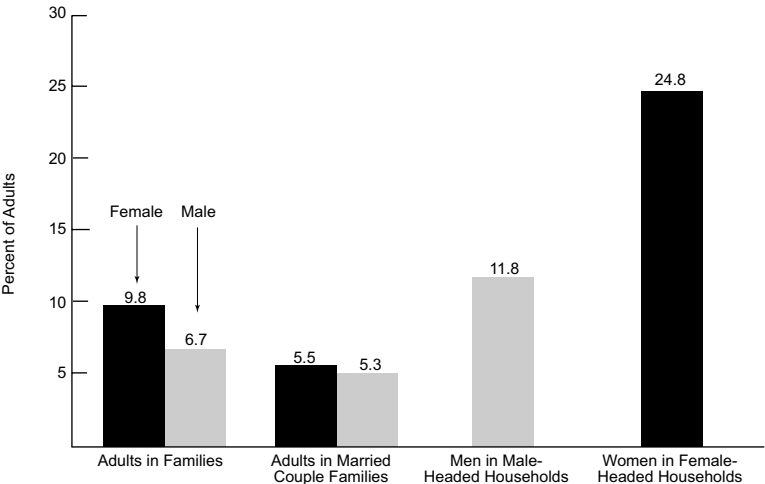
Education is related to poverty as well. The poverty rate among women with no high school diploma is 28.3 percent; this is far higher than the rate among women with a high school diploma (12.3 percent). Women with at least a

4-year college degree experience the lowest poverty rate (4.5 percent).

*1 The Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is poor. If a family's total income is less than that family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered to be poor. Examples of 2004 poverty levels were \$9,645 for an individual, \$12,334 for a family of two, \$15,067 for a family of three, and \$19,307 for a family of four.*

### Adults in Families,\* Living Below the Poverty Level, by Household Type and Sex, 2004

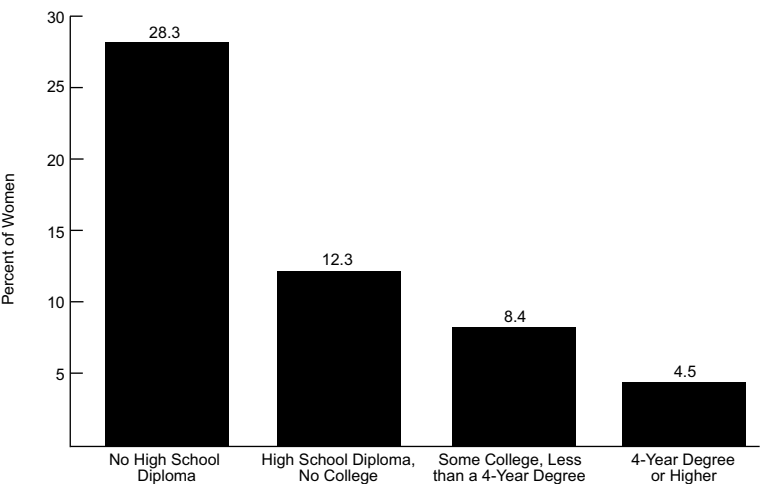
Source I.3: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey



\*Families are defined as a group of two people related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together.

### Women Aged 25 and Older Living Below the Poverty Level, by Educational Status, 2004

Source I.3: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey



## EDUCATIONAL DEGREES AND INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

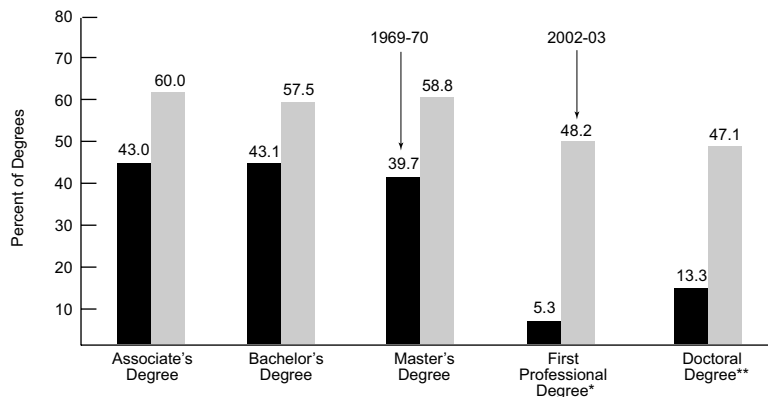
The number of post-secondary educational degrees awarded to women rose from just over half a million in the 1969-1970 school year to more than 1.5 million in 2002-03. Although the number of degrees earned by men has also increased, the growth among women has been much faster and therefore the proportion of degrees earned by women has also risen dramatically. In 1969-1970, men earned a majority of

every type of degree, while in 2002-03, women earned more than 50 percent of all associate's, bachelor's, and master's degrees, and earned almost half of all first professional and doctoral degrees. The most significant increase has been in the proportion of women earning a first professional degree, which jumped from 5.3 percent in 1969-1970 to 48.2 percent in 2002-03. That year, the total number of women earning their first professional degree (38,976) was 21 times greater than in 1969-1970 (1,841).

Males are more likely than females to be employed as full-time instructional staff in degree-granting institutions; overall, 60.6 percent of full-time faculty were male in 2003, while the remaining 39.4 percent were female. With regard to rank, the proportion of males to females declined steadily with rank. The only ranks in which women were a majority were those of instructor and lecturer; males were the majority among full, associate, and assistant professors.

### Degrees Awarded to Women, by Type, 1969-70 and 2002-03

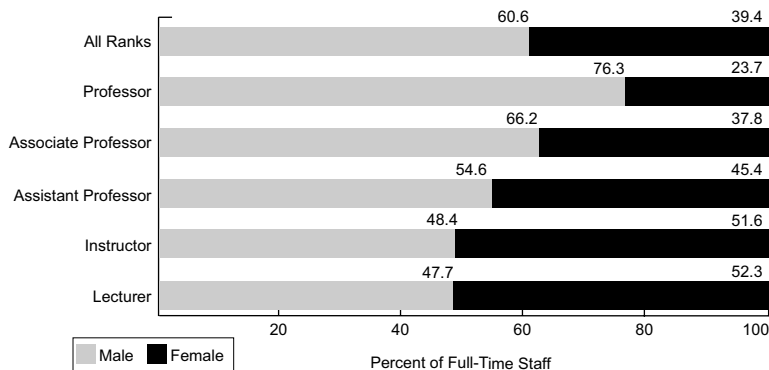
Source I.4: U.S. Department of Education, Digest of Education Statistics



\*Includes fields of dentistry (D.D.S. or D.M.D.), medicine (M.D.), optometry (O.D.), osteopathic medicine (D.O.), pharmacy (D.Pharm.), podiatry (D.P.M.), veterinary medicine (D.V.M.), chiropractic (D.C. or D.C.M.), law (LL.B. or J.D.), and theological professions (M.Div. or M.H.L.) \*\*Includes Doctor of Philosophy degree (Ph.D.) as well as degrees awarded for fulfilling specialized requirements in professional fields such as education (Ed.D.), musical arts (D.M.A.), business administration (D.B.A.), and engineering (D.Eng. or D.E.S.). First-professional degrees, such as M.D. and D.D.S., are not included under this heading.

### Full-Time Instructional Staff in Degree-Granting Institutions, by Academic Rank and Sex, 2002-03

Source I.4: U.S. Department of Education, Digest of Education Statistics



## WOMEN IN HEALTH PROFESSIONS SCHOOLS

The health professions have long been characterized by sex disparities. Some professions, such as medicine and dentistry, have historically been

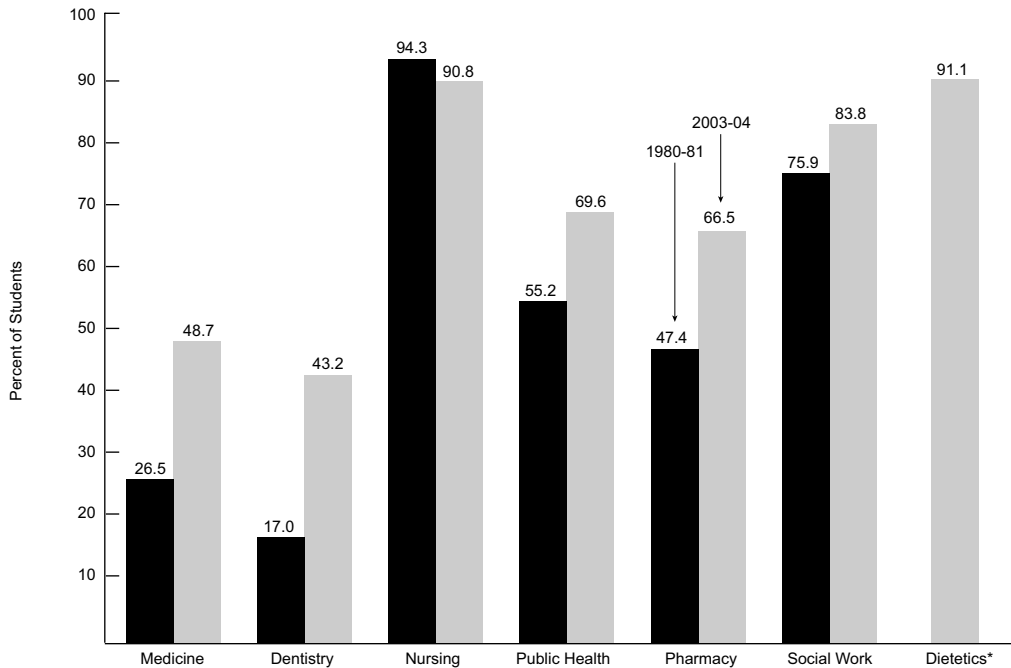
dominated by males, while others, such as nursing, have been predominantly female. Over the past several decades, these gaps have narrowed, and in some cases have disappeared. In 1980-81, 47.4 percent of pharmacy students were

women, while in the fall of 2004 women represented nearly two-thirds (66.5 percent) of the students. Even in fields where men are still the majority, the representation of female students has grown. In 1980-81, only 26.5 percent of medical students were women compared to nearly one-half (48.7 percent) in the fall of 2004. In schools of osteopathic medicine, women now comprise 46.9 percent of total enrollees. Similar gains have been made in the field of dentistry, where 43.2 percent of students were women in 2003-04 compared to only 17.0 percent in 1980-81.

By the 2004 school year, female students represented a growing majority in a number of health professions schools, including graduate schools of social work (83.8 percent), physical therapy (77.9 percent), public health (69.6 percent), and optometry (62.2 percent). Women also represent the vast majority of enrollees in dietetics programs—in 2004, 91.1 percent of dietetics students and interns were women. Nursing, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, also continues to be dominated by women, although the proportion of students who are female is slowly declining. In the 1980-81 academic year, 94.3 percent of nursing students were female, while in the fall of 2004, females represented 90.8 percent of nursing students.

### Women in Schools for Selected Health Professions, 1980-81 and 2003-04

Source I.5: Professional Associations



\*Data from 1980-81 are unavailable.

## WOMEN IN THE LABOR FORCE

In 2004, 59.2 percent of women aged 16 and older were in the labor force (either employed or unemployed and actively seeking employment). This represents a 37 percent increase from the 43.3 percent of women who were in the labor force in 1970. Females aged 16 and older made up 46.4 percent of the workforce in 2004.<sup>1</sup> Among working females, 74 percent worked full-time, compared to 89 percent of males.<sup>2</sup>

The representation of females in the labor force varies greatly by occupational sector. In 2004, women composed over 60 percent of sales and

office workers, but only 1.3 percent of construction, extraction, and maintenance workers. Other positions which are more commonly held by women than men include services jobs (56.2 percent) and management, professional, and related jobs (50.4 percent). Women are the minority in production, transportation, and moving (23.1 percent), farming, fishing, and forestry (19.6 percent), and military (17.4 percent).

Earnings by women and men also vary greatly. Women represent a majority of earners making less than \$25,000 per year. Of earners making less than \$2,500 per year, 58.4 percent were women in 2004; however, women represented only 19.1

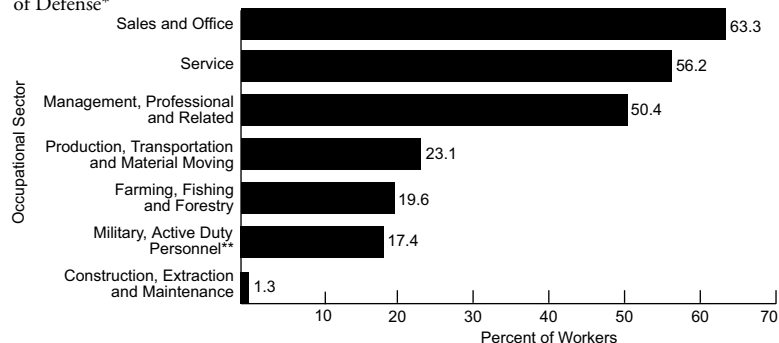
percent of earners making \$100,000 or more per year. The difference between women's and men's earnings is larger among older than younger workers. For instance, women aged 45-54 earned 73 cents for every dollar earned by males aged 45-54, while women aged 16-24 earned 94 cents for every dollar earned by males of the same age.

1 U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Women in the Labor Force: A Databook, Report 985, Table 2. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutionalized population 16 years and over by sex, 1970-2004 annual averages. May 2005* at <http://www.bls.gov/cps/wlf-table2-2005.pdf>

2 U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Current Population Survey, Employment and Earnings, Table 8: Employed and unemployed full- and part-time workers by age, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity. January 2005* at <http://www.bls.gov/cps/home.htm#annual>

## Representation of Females Aged 16 and Older in Occupational Sectors, 2004

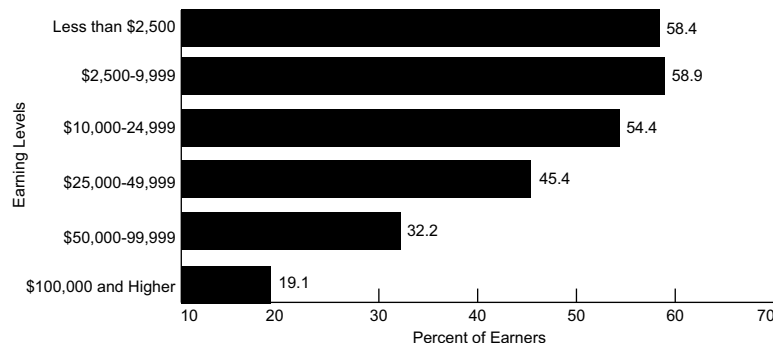
Sources I.1, I.6: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey; U.S. Department of Defense\*



\*Data on military enlistment are from the Department of Defense, FY 2004; all other are from the Census Bureau. \*\*Excluding cadets in military academies.

## Representation of Females Aged 16 and Older in Annual Earning Levels, 2004

Source I.1: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey



FOOD SECURITY

In 1999-2002, over 15 percent of women were not fully food secure, meaning that they did not always have access to enough food for a healthy, active lifestyle. In the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), food security and hunger are measured through a series of questions including: whether the respondent worried that food would run out before there would be money to buy more; whether the respondent or his/her family could not afford to eat balanced meals; whether the respondent or his/her family cut the size of meals or skipped meals because there was not enough money for food; and, whether the respondent or his/her family ever went for a whole day without eating because there was not enough food. For many of these questions, respondents were asked how often these situations arose. It should be noted that in many cases the situation is occasional or episodic, not chronic.

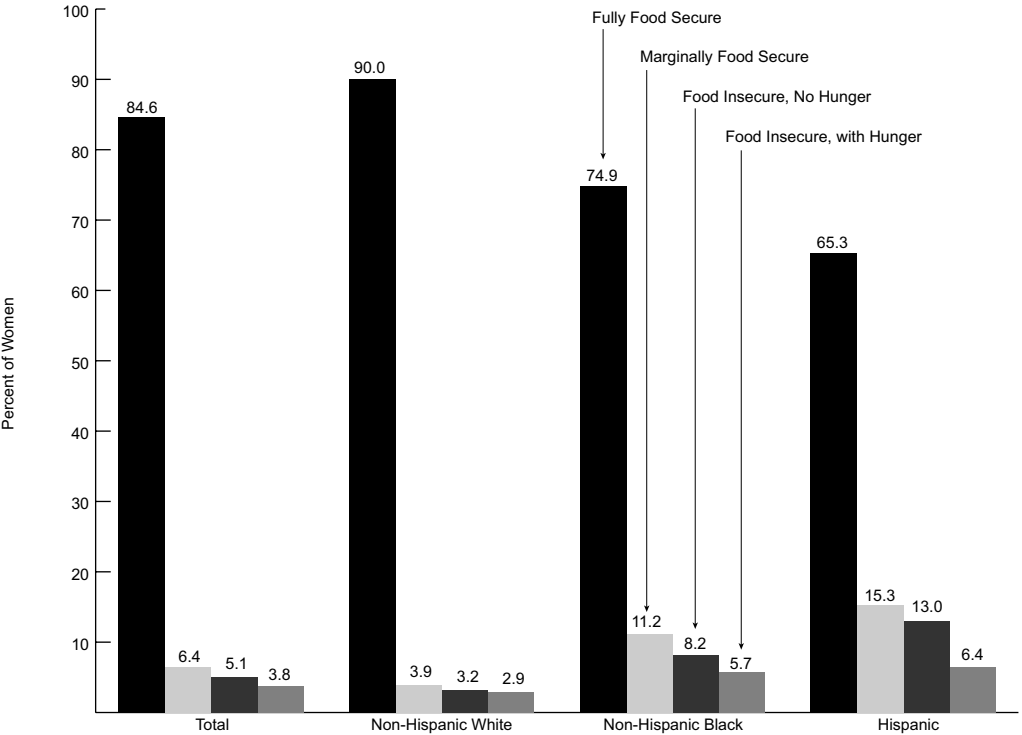
Although there is little difference in food security and hunger among men and women, rates varied noticeably by race and ethnicity. Among women, non-Hispanic Whites were most likely to be fully food secure (90.0 percent), while Hispanics were least likely (65.3 percent). Hispanic women also had the highest rates of marginal food security (15.3 percent), food insecurity

without hunger (13.0 percent), and food insecurity with hunger (6.4 percent), while non-

Hispanic Whites had the lowest rates in each category.

Food Security Among Women 18 Years and Older, by Race/Ethnicity,\* 1999-2002

Source I.7: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey



\*The sample of those of other races was too small to produce reliable estimates.

## WOMEN AND FEDERAL PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Federal programs can provide low-income women and their families with essential help in obtaining food and income support. The Federal Food Stamp Program helps low-income individuals purchase food: in 2004, 68 percent of all adult Food Stamp participants were women. Nearly half of women participants were in the 18-35 age group.

The Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) also plays an

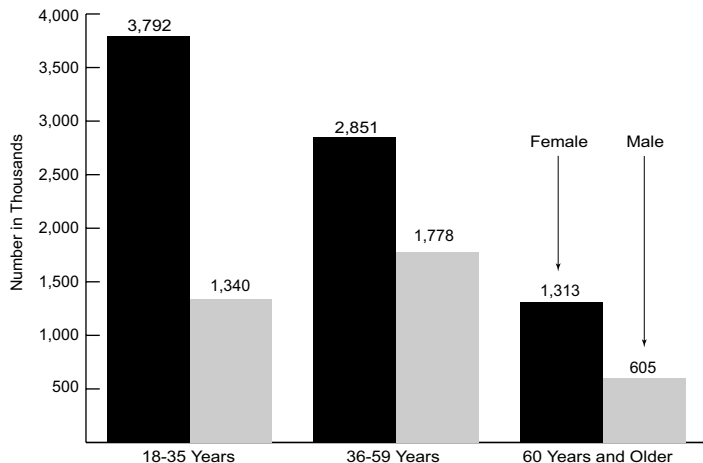
important role in serving women and families by providing supplementary nutrition during pregnancy, the postpartum period, and while breastfeeding. Most WIC participants (76 percent) are infants and children; however, the program also serves over 1.9 million women, representing 24.5 percent of WIC participants. From 1992 to 2004, the number of adult women participating in WIC increased by 57 percent, and it continues to rise.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a Federal- and State-funded program

that provides cash assistance and work opportunities to needy families. In 1996, TANF replaced the national welfare program known as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and related initiatives. The overarching goals of TANF are to move recipients into work and turn welfare into a program of temporary assistance with a lifetime maximum enrollment of 5 years. In Fiscal Year 2002, the last year for which data are available, adult TANF recipients numbered 1.3 million, of whom 1.2 million (over 90 percent) were women.

### Adult Recipients of Food Stamps, by Age and Sex, 2004

Source I.8: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Stamp Quality Control Sample



### Women WIC Participants, Selected Years 1992-2004

Source I.9: U.S. Department of Agriculture, WIC Program Participation Data

